

A World of “Locked-In” System: The “Pivot” & U.S. Military Power

by

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Class of 2013

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) xx-03-2013		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A World of "Locked-In" System: The "Pivot" & U.S. Military Power				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Ricky Mills United States Air Force				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Janeen Klingler Department of National Security & Strategy				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5,989					
14. ABSTRACT In order to deter and win wars of the 21st Century, the U.S. military must inspire others to join the U.S.-led international order by first, aligning its vision and culture to the strategic environment, then building trust and partner capacity to expand and strengthen the network, and lastly, reducing uncertainty by gathering and making sense of data. In order to show how the U.S. military can address the challenges of a new era in the Asia-Pacific with rising powers and diffuse technologies, this paper will explain why the U.S. military must realign its strategy to mitigate the effects of its "wasting assets." The paper will then examine the strategic environment and the current U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific. The paper will also provide a description and analysis of three ways the U.S. military must adapt to align itself to this security environment. A final analysis is provided on how the U.S. military can remain the guarantor of the U.S.-led international order.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS China, Pivot, Strategy, Deterrence					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 36	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A World of “Locked-In” System: The “Pivot” & U.S. Military Power

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Abstract

Title: A World of “Locked-In” System: The “Pivot” & U.S. Military Power
Report Date: March 2013
Page Count: 36
Word Count: 5,989
Key Terms: China, Pivot, Strategy, Deterrence
Classification: Unclassified

In order to deter and win wars of the 21st Century, the U.S. military must inspire others to join the U.S.-led international order by first, aligning its vision and culture to the strategic environment, then building trust and partner capacity to expand and strengthen the network, and lastly, reducing uncertainty by gathering and making sense of data. In order to show how the U.S. military can address the challenges of a new era in the Asia-Pacific with rising powers and diffuse technologies, this paper will explain why the U.S. military must realign its strategy to mitigate the effects of its “wasting assets.” The paper will then examine the strategic environment and the current U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific. The paper will also provide a description and analysis of three ways the U.S. military must adapt to align itself to this security environment. A final analysis is provided on how the U.S. military can remain the guarantor of the U.S.-led international order.

A World of “Locked-In” System: The “Pivot” & U.S. Military Power

Joshua Ramo, former editor of *Time* magazine, makes the case that “Networks are the essential metaphor of our age, what assembly lines were 150 years ago.”¹ The first era of networking was about connecting people together, the second about “what goes on inside the resulting web.”² Companies like Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn have built networks that run on their own logic to gather data, make sense of the data (such as users’ habits and preferences), get smarter, and get more people to use the network.³

Once they get a foothold in a market, they become nearly impossible to dislodge. These companies have built platforms that run on an economic logic known as “increasing returns to scale.” The more people who use Google, the smarter its systems gets, which means more people use it, which means... This is why we have *one* Google, *one* Facebook, *one* eBay, and so on. Get the inside algorithms right, and you’ll become an irresistible magnet.⁴

These leading-edge multinational companies added another in-depth layer to the U.S.-led international order, further strengthening a system of global interdependence—a system “able to lock in the rest of the world.”⁵

This world of “locked-in system” wasn’t possible without the hard and soft power of the U.S. military as the guarantor of international order. With war weary troops and more limited means, the U.S. military will rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region to preserve peace and counterbalance the only potential rival to the U.S.-led international order. In order to deter and win wars, the U.S. military must lead credibly by first looking inward and aligning its vision and culture to the security environment, then looking outward by building a stronger network, and reducing uncertainty to gain an information advantage. Doing so will make the U.S. military the “irresistible magnet” and inspire others to join its global network, thereby promoting stability and prosperity in the region.

In order to show how the U.S. military can address the challenges of a new era in the Asia-Pacific with rising powers and diffuse technologies, this paper will begin by explaining why the U.S. military must realign its strategy to mitigate the effects of its “wasting assets.” The paper will then examine the strategic environment to include the rise of both the “American order” and China and their effects on the international system. The paper will next describe the current U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific. Following the examination of the strategic environment, the paper will provide a description and analysis of three ways the U.S. military must adapt to align itself to this security environment: 1) realign the vision and culture, 2) build networks by understanding and overcoming the challenges associated with multinational operations and by relationship-building, and 3) reduce uncertainty by gathering and making sense of the data. Lastly, the paper will provide a final analysis on how the U.S. military can remain the guarantor of the “world of locked-in system” built on American values.

Wasting Asset

In the financial world, a “wasting asset” is a fixed asset, such as machinery, that diminishes in value over time. In the early days of the Cold War, “wasting asset” became a common term among U.S. policymakers to describe the U.S. nuclear arsenal after the Soviet Union successfully tested their first atomic bomb in August 1949.⁶ A sense of panic ensued upon the realization that the U.S. no longer held a monopoly on nuclear weapons,⁷ resulting in the completion of the National Security Council Paper NSC-68 in April 1950.⁸ This influential report and the North Korea attack brought about a new policy: a massive, costly, and rapid build-up of the U.S. military and its conventional and nuclear weaponry⁹ while sustaining its ability project and sustain

global forces.¹⁰ Despite the loss of its nuclear monopoly, the U.S. successfully deterred the Soviet Union until its collapse in December 1991.

Serving as the modern day version of NSC-68 and a blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020, Secretary Leon Panetta's strategy document titled *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* publicly declares the U.S. military "will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region."¹¹ Unlike the end of the Cold War when the U.S. possessed a near monopoly on several weapon systems and enabling capabilities,¹² the U.S. military is now in possession of "wasting assets" that could constrain its ability to project power, maintain regional access, and operate freely within the global commons—the sea, air, space, and cyberspace domains. Just as the Truman administration and the U.S. military realigned its strategy in the early years of the Cold War to overcome its wasting assets, so too does the Obama administration and the U.S. military today.

Strategic Environment

The U.S. may no longer remain a sole superpower, but she remains the key player in promoting and maintaining international order. John Ikenberry described the pivotal moment in international order building occurring after World War II, as characterized by American hegemony, open markets, cooperative security, multilateral rules and institutions, and democratic community.¹³ After the Cold War, the "American order" went global.¹⁴ States choosing globalization and the "American order" joined a "closed system"¹⁵—described by the English geographer Halford Mackinder as a system where nothing could be altered without changing the balance of all.¹⁶ Shifts in distribution of power were followed by balancing acts. While Mackinder feared that one or two states would seek predominance by force, a globally integrated system

pressures states to adopt a system-centered approach to strategy rather than a state-centric one. As English naval historian Geoffrey Till describes, “The system reduces the capacity and the incentive for states to take independent action in defense of their interests.”¹⁷ In the globalized system, the prohibitive costs of war outweigh the benefits. Thus, states focus on *international* security, not just *national* security in order to preserve the interests of the system as a whole.

With its low barrier to entry and potential large benefits, China discovered how the open market system could yield enormous returns.¹⁸ China’s economic engine benefitted its political leadership, fueled its military growth, and perhaps rekindled aspirations of a return to the Middle Kingdom. China’s ultimate goal is regional hegemony, and within the domestic political arena, the preservation of the Chinese Communist Party’s power.¹⁹ “Comprehensive national power”—a Chinese concept involving the development of its scientific and technical industrial base in order to build up and maximize its military, economic, and political power—is the means with which to attain their goal.²⁰ To build up its industrial base, China took advantage of the open market system and used scientific and industrial espionage, bribery, and theft of intellectual property.²¹ At the same time, China bought foreign companies and traded products to obtain access to technology and information.²² The political scientist, Aaron Friedberg, asserts that China’s strategy will not require direct confrontation:

Instead, they seek to reassure their neighbors, relying on the attractive force of China’s massive economy to counter nascent balancing efforts against it. Following the advice of the ancient military strategist Sun-tzu, Beijing aims to “win without fighting,” gradually creating a situation in which overt resistance to its wishes will appear futile.²³

China’s increased military strength, more aggressive defense of its territorial claims, and its declaration of the South China Sea as a “core interest”²⁴ have increased

tensions and insecurities in the Western Pacific. The resultant situation typifies the classic security dilemma, wherein China and its neighbors feel insecure in relation to each other. As Kenneth Waltz articulated the dynamic:

...the source of one's own comfort is the source of another's worry. Hence a state that is amassing instruments of war, even for its own defensive, is cast by others as a threat requiring response. The response itself then serves to confirm the first state's belief that it had reason to worry.²⁵

Not surprisingly, arms races typically ensued. China's neighboring states responded with military buildups as evidenced by arms imports to Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia skyrocketing 84 percent, 146 percent, and 722 percent, respectively, since 2000.²⁶ And China's annual defense spending quadrupled from \$30 billion in 2000 to \$120 billion in 2010.²⁷ A second response was counterbalancing. As Henry Kissinger observes, "Even those Asian states that are not members of alliances with the United States seek the reassurance of an American political presence in the region and of American forces in nearby seas as the guarantor of the world to which they have become accustomed."²⁸

U.S. grand strategy in the twentieth century consisted of maintaining the balance of power abroad and providing extended deterrence to others.²⁹ The U.S. continued this strategy in this century as evidenced by the public declaration of the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. balanced China's rise by bolstering its military capability in the region, strengthening its existing alliances and security relationships, and building new partnerships in South and Southeast Asia.³⁰ For example, the U.S. invested in a strategic partnership with India as an economic and security partner in the broader Indian Ocean region.³¹ U.S. grand strategy is now a three-pronged strategy with the addition of engagement. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described the

engagement strategy of “forward-deployed diplomacy” as the dispatching of diplomatic assets—high-ranking officials, development experts, and interagency teams—“to every country and corner of the Asia-Pacific region.”³²

Just as the battlefield evolves, requiring constant reassessment and adjustments to strategy and policy, so do the domestic and international fronts during war and peace. Tomorrow’s major battle is on the domestic front. With national debt becoming a risk to the U.S. economy and leadership of the international order, the Department of Defense (DoD) must carefully craft a strategy for the Asia-Pacific with more limited means. The purpose and manner in which the military instrument of power is employed will also change. Preemptive and unilateral military intervention will be replaced by strategic restraint. As Fareed Zakaria writes, “At a time when old orders are changing and new forces are emerging, he [Obama] has kept the U.S. engaged and at the forefront of these trends, but he has been wary of grand declarations and military interventions.”³³ The reason for the restraint and wariness is the belief that the U.S. overextended itself militarily in Iraq and Afghanistan, resulting in worsening ties and relations with both allies and adversaries.³⁴ The DoD must understand these political concerns and associated policies and how the fighting forces are subordinated to it. The U.S. military should then adapt accordingly. To align itself to the strategic environment, the U.S. military must first become an institution capable of looking inward to “get the inside algorithms right.”

Look Inward: Aligning Vision and Culture to the Security Environment

The U.S. Army War College *Strategic Leadership Primer* suggests that creating and articulating a compelling vision is the most important strategic leader task.³⁵ The vision communicates the organizational values to get the “right people on the bus” and

provide direction on “where to drive it.”³⁶ More specifically, the vision provides a sense of identity, purpose, and energy shared by every member of an organization, but more importantly, it establishes and communicates the basic, enduring values of the organization. With the rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific, the first challenge is creating and communicating a vision to a battle-hardened force that has spent far more time fighting and winning wars than shaping and preventing wars.

Organizational culture refers to “the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization.”³⁷ MIT Professor Edgar Schein’s offers an analogy that “culture is to the organization what character is to the individual.”³⁸ Change is constant. The U.S. military must expect to continue operating in an environment requiring speed, adaptability, and innovative ways of thinking and operating. Distinguished by “large degrees of independence and flexibility”, the *adhocracy* culture best aligns with the strategic environment rather than the *hierarchy* culture of the traditional U.S. Army.³⁹ Aligning the culture to a non-static environment can be a challenge given the diversity of personnel and different Service cultures and missions. In order to align an organization’s culture, leaders must have a methodology for understanding culture.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project provides such a methodology. Two of the GLOBE dimensions are of particular relevance in the current and future security environment: power distance and assertiveness. Professors Gerras, Wong, and Allen at the U.S. Army War College explain that “if power distance is high, those in a position of authority expect, and receive obedience—the organization is based on hierarchical decision-making

processes with limited one-way participation and communication.”⁴⁰ U.S. forces operating in complex, changing security environment should operate with a low power distance, flattening the organization structure and enabling a more autonomous, adaptive, and learning environment. Creating a learning environment means limiting the penalty for failure. As Professor Wong states, “in order to develop adaptive and creative leaders, you must allow them to fail.”⁴¹

Assertiveness reflects the degree of forcefulness or timidity in people’s relationships with others.⁴² Leaders and planners must welcome healthy debate and dialogue without retribution. Despite being the “big dog on the block,” American leaders must also advocate for and provide allies and partners an appropriate voice in order to maintain unity of effort. As General Wesley Clark wrote of NATO operations during the Kosovo War, “In the American channel there were constant temptations to ignore Allied reservations...”⁴³ In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins warns that “there’s a huge difference between the opportunity to “have your say” and the opportunity to be *heard*.”⁴⁴ Thus, future commanders and staff must not only create an atmosphere of open and candid exchange of ideas, they must actively *listen*.

In summary, the vision—values and direction—and culture must align to the strategic environment. Speed and adaptability must be valued in order to support an adhocracy culture. The institution must demand and reward innovation and continuous improvement (in oneself, process, and product) in order to build an adhocracy culture. Innovation is encouraged by not cultivating a zero defect mentality, by allowing mistakes, and making it clear that failure to try is unacceptable. Demanding dialogue and constructive critiques will increase assertiveness and produce low power distance.

Furthermore, encouraging all organizational members to listen, challenge assumptions, seek and give feedback, and embrace life-long learning increases assertiveness and produces low power distance. But in order to fully develop shared vision and culture, the institution's bedrock must be trust. As General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated, "...trust is at the center of who we are and what we do as members of the Profession of Arms."⁴⁵

Public trust in the military institution is sacred. Public trust erodes when the institution fails to maintain a culture of integrity, ethical behavior, and accountability. One of the conclusions documented by Don Snider and Lloyd Matthews from their project on the state of the Army profession was that "Military character and the professional ethic were the foundation for the trust the American people place in their military and the foundation for the trust Army officers place in their profession."⁴⁶ Furthermore, Snider and Matthews found that "unless commanders establish a culture of trust within Army units, soldiers will not feel free to tell the truth...."⁴⁷ Major Lee DeRemer provides an example of the consequences for failure to establish a culture of integrity and trust.

DeRemer chronicled the "no-win" dilemma—the legitimate concern for safety of aircrews versus externally imposed constraints that imperiled the crews—faced by the Seventh Air Force Commander during the Vietnam War.⁴⁸ Alleged rules of engagement (ROE) violations and falsified reporting led to General Lavelle's relinquishment of command and subsequent demotion. DeRemer identified two mistakes made by General Lavelle that serve as lessons for institutional leaders: 1) failure to make clear that the institution demands absolute integrity of its people can lead to unethical

behavior and compromise of the command's integrity and 2) cutting corners in integrity—such as liberal interpretation of the ROE—can lead to the “slippery slope effect” whereby that action permeates the entire organization and leads to further decay of the command's integrity.⁴⁹

Because of the importance of the command's integrity, every military professional must value integrity and do what is right, always. Additional expectations include members having the courage to make hard, ethical decisions *and* having the duty to report unethical behavior. Service members must never take for granted the legacy of public support that the current generation has earned. Institutional leaders must understand the importance of integrity at all levels of command and reinforce a climate of integrity which, in turn, will reinforce a culture of trust. Only with a culture of trust is an adhocracy culture possible. And only with an adhocracy culture is organizational change, alignment, and vision attainment possible. As the U.S. military looks inward, adapts, and aligns itself to the security environment, the institution must also look externally at the way it will shape, prevent, and fight wars.

Look Outward: Embracing the Indirect Approach

With preemptive and unilateral military intervention being replaced by strategic restraint, U.S. operations that are undertaken will certainly entail a multinational approach. This approach is not new, and its value will increase. In a 1952 speech to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Field Marshall Sir William Slim remarked on the difficulties of multinational action but reminded the audience that “there is only one thing worse than having allies—that is not having allies.”⁵⁰ More recently, Lieutenant General Mart de Kruif, former Regional Command South Commander in Kandahar, stated that international cooperation is “a reality” of modern military

operations and is not a “necessary evil” but a “source of strength.”⁵¹ And the National Intelligence Council’s *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* report makes clear that “Those countries with some of the strongest fundamentals—GDP, population size, etc.—will not be able to punch their weight unless they also learn to operate in networks and coalitions in a multipolar world.”⁵²

Not surprisingly, U.S. joint doctrine states that a partner state’s offer of support should not be declined because it enhances the relationship and increases the legitimacy of the operations both domestically and internationally.⁵³ Multinational operations also bring more forces and offers unique capabilities and perspectives, along with space (land, sea, and air) with which to operate in or from.⁵⁴ Finally, multinational operations allow partner states to have a “seat at the table”, to share responsibility, and to spread the risk.⁵⁵ As the U.S. rebalances to the Asia-Pacific, operations undertaken by the U.S. military—from humanitarian assistance and disaster response to counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, and counter-proliferation operations—will seek a multinational approach as the first and likely best option.

Multinational operations (whether undertaken within the structure of an alliance or a coalition⁵⁶) come with significant challenges. The main challenge is unity of effort toward common objectives.⁵⁷ General Sir Rupert Smith who commanded the U.N. Protection Force in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, cautions that, “...one must always bear in mind that the glue that holds a coalition together is a common enemy, not a common desired political outcome”⁵⁸ and cautioned military leaders to be aware of the political factors behind a multinational operation:

...each national contingent will have been sent for different reasons, and its government and people will have a different balance as to the risks and

rewards. Each contingent will have to some degree different equipment, organization, doctrines and training, and each will have a different source of materiel as well as varying social, legal and political support.⁵⁹

These differences and challenges must be understood as the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is undertaken.

Whereas alliances typically have standardization agreements—with NATO being the gold standard—to enhance interoperability, coalitions do not.⁶⁰ Interoperability is more than just technology; it also includes doctrine, procedures, and training. Factors that inhibit interoperability include: national proprietary defense information; time available; differences in military organization, security, language, doctrine, and equipment; experience level; and conflicting personalities.⁶¹ For example, sharing of U.S. classified information to coalition partners continued to be a roadblock during the Libya War because of U.S. security procedures and U.S. participants not understanding the requirement to “classify for releasability.”⁶² To mitigate these and other challenges, joint doctrine serves as a guide but warns that there is no “standard template” to guide multinational action.⁶³ With no standard template, two key strategic leader tasks—alignment and building trust—best serve military leaders as supplemental guides to achieve unified action⁶⁴ and attain strategic objectives.

Alignment entails scanning the environment for relevant societal, international, technological, demographic, and economic developments.⁶⁵ In multinational operations, the alignment process must also include environmental scanning of the participating states of the alliance or coalition. This scanning should identify the political factors as well as the specific constraints, restraints, capabilities, and deficiencies of the contributing forces. Scanning is as simple as a Marine asking his foreign counterpart, “What are your interests? What are your needs? How can we help?” This environmental

scanning process should augment the mission analysis step in the Joint Operation Planning Process, resulting in a revised mission statement, commander's intent, and updated planning guidance.⁶⁶ The strategy—the ends, ways, and means—should then be aligned to enact the commander's intent.⁶⁷ Without alignment, unity of effort suffers. While alignment is a key element for success, the foundation for success in multinational operations is trust.

In building trust, personal factors matter. People make a difference and are not interchangeable.⁶⁸ As Colonial America's first coalition partner, General Rochambeau made a major difference in building a relationship between the French expeditionary forces and the Continental Army, leading to the coalition's success at the Battle of Yorktown. General Rochambeau's ability to compromise for the sake of the mission and willingness to work with fellow officers were crucial characteristics for successful cooperation with the Americans.⁶⁹ General Sir Rupert Smith provides salient advice for today's commanders:

Conduct command on the basis of goodwill to all allies. The moment the corrosive attitudes of mistrust, envy and dislike are loose in the command, its fragile morale is doomed. One's best advocates in the capitals that supplied the troops of the command are their own commanders.⁷⁰

But personal factors are not enough. Leaders must also build relationships with partners long *before* a crisis has started.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen remarked, "Developing a relationship on the battlefield in the midst of a crisis with someone I've never met before can be very challenging...Trust has to be built up over time."⁷¹ Clearly trust cannot be surged, and relationships cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, initial perceptions are key, and military members must avoid sending wrong messages to

allies and partners who could seek assistance from another nation instead.⁷² Trust is built by understanding partners' language, history, and culture.⁷³ To better prepare leaders for multinational operations, innovative training approaches—such as pre-commissioning study abroad programs, career-long language training, military exchange assignments, and increased attendance at allied or partner military education programs⁷⁴—should be implemented and rewarded. While joint doctrine states that, “Communicating clearly, recognizing each other’s limitations, and building consensus and cooperation are critical stepping stones to achieving a unified effort,”⁷⁵ this document suggests that building trust is the foundation for all others.

Building trust also means bringing and sharing enabling capabilities. Partner capacity can be described as a three-legged stool: identifying deficiencies, building capacities, and providing enabling capabilities.⁷⁶ The current method of determining U.S. military capabilities is deficient because American military enabling capabilities—intelligence, command and control, precision weapons, and logistics—are determined by what’s necessary to support U.S. operations instead of multinational operations.⁷⁷ Because U.S. enabling capabilities will remain in high demand, American strategic leaders should expect to continue contributing enabling capabilities and should consider allies and partners’ capabilities in the programming for future capabilities. Affordability could become an issue, but “...it is much more cost effective to prevent conflict than it is to stop one once it has started.”⁷⁸ One enabling capability, in particular, is often the first one requested in U.S.-supported multinational operations—intelligence.⁷⁹ The U.S. intelligence network’s “ability to cast a wide net and fuse information”⁸⁰ is unmatched in history and decreases the probability of miscalculation, surprise, and wars.

Reduce Uncertainty to Achieve Information Advantage

Clausewitz noted that the element of chance/uncertainty reinforces the fact that war is always a gamble.⁸¹ Clausewitz lived in an era with limited means of gathering data and making sense of it, leading him to write that “most intelligence is false.”⁸² Imperfect information and its associated friction cause uncertainty. As Clausewitz writes, “the difficulty of accurate recognition constitutes one of the most serious sources of friction in war, by making things appear entirely different from what one had expected.”⁸³ Thus, a commander’s intuition must ultimately be relied upon to comprehend the security environment and make effective decisions and “with uncertainty in one scale, courage and self-confidence must be thrown into the other to correct the balance.”⁸⁴

Today’s U.S. global intelligence network collects and fuses data from a diffuse mixture of sensors across the land, maritime, air, space, and cyberspace domains to reduce uncertainty and inform decision-makers and warfighters. The primary objective of intelligence is to provide continual information advantage, measured not in terms of the volume of data but in the value and quality of the intelligence.⁸⁵ Information advantage means having enhanced “understanding of the core issue, how it relates to other matters, and possible consequences of alternative courses of action”⁸⁶ in order to make better decisions. What intelligence cannot do is guarantee better decisions, but being ill-informed or misinformed will definitely add friction and reduce the likelihood of success.⁸⁷ The challenge will be to not only broaden the network’s ability to *characterize* the battleground but *shape* the future security environment. To do this, the data from the global intelligence network must be discoverable to all analysts and decision-makers in

other Services, combatant commands, allies, and coalition partners in order to reduce redundancies and create shared understanding.

Two decades ago former Director of Central Intelligence, James Woolsey, testified before the Senate that, “We have slain a dragon. But we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.”⁸⁸ The dragon was the Soviet Union, characterized as “big, slow moving, and predictable”⁸⁹ that made intelligence work far easier than today. After years of dedicated focus and development of significant capabilities to monitor a single monolithic threat, the Intelligence Community (IC) realigned its people and network to meet surging requirements in shortened timelines against a multitude of potential threats. Realignment occurred again following 9/11 with a rapid build-up in manpower⁹⁰ and intelligence capabilities to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and its extremist affiliates.⁹¹ The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific necessitates another realignment in order to shape and prevent wars.

At a recent CSIS Military Strategy Forum, Air Force General Mike Hostage, Commander, Air Combat Command, stated, “We are now shifting to a theater [Asia-Pacific] where there’s an adversary out there who’s going to have a vote on whether I have that staring eye over the battlefield 24/7, 365. And I’m pretty certain they’re not going to allow that to happen.”⁹² The pivot will entail more than adjusting the force structure and developing new capabilities and concepts to deter or win an Air-Sea Battle. The security environment requires a network that can integrate multiple sensor data, eliminate the “chaff from the wheat,” and build a “fused mosaic of intelligence”⁹³ that can be shared. More importantly, it requires the humans in the network to think

differently. Thinking differently means shifting focus from providing situational awareness to strategic analysis. As a CRS report noted, “Congressional intelligence committees have for some time noted weaknesses in analysis...and a predominant focus on current intelligence at the expense of strategic analysis.”⁹⁴

Thinking differently also means answering different questions and analyzing different threats and opportunities. Rather than analyzing a drone feed to determine the “who” and “where” of an insurgent network, analysts must start answering the “why” and “so what” of a geopolitical event. The IC will not only monitor military and terrorist threats—adversaries, their weapons, and their intentions—but also non-military threats such as climate change, natural disasters, infectious disease, and availability of natural resources.⁹⁵ And the IC must place an increased emphasis on monitoring potential *opportunities*—such as governance, economics, development, and local populations—in order to shape positive outcomes.⁹⁶ The U.S. intelligence network can only meet its surging demands and compressed timelines by building an extensive human network of “sensors” and “outside experts.” As Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, wrote in his seminal article on “fixing intel” in Afghanistan:

Analysts must absorb information with the thoroughness of historians, organize it with the skill of librarians, and disseminate it with the zeal of journalists. They must embrace open-source, population-centric information as the lifeblood of their analytical work. They must open their doors to anyone who is willing to exchange information...⁹⁷

Finally, thinking differently means recognizing cognitive biases and embracing intelligence to make better, informed decisions. Richard Immerman explains the cardinal principle of cognitive psychology: “...once we form a belief, or are predisposed to believe something, we are loath to qualify let alone discard it. We “process” new information that we receive as consistent with and confirming a preexisting belief or

image.”⁹⁸ With preexisting and deeply ingrained beliefs, contemporary decision makers and their assistants are prone to become their own intelligence analysts on issues that are central to them.⁹⁹ Failure to recognize cognitive biases can lead to strategic miscalculation as evidenced by the Iraq War in 2003. A veteran intelligence analyst who served under the Bush Administration wrote, “The administration used intelligence not to inform decision-making, but to justify a decision already made.”¹⁰⁰ To avoid another strategic miscalculation, cognitive biases must be recognized, analysts must have the courage to tell the truth, decision-makers must have the courage to hear the truth, and a relationship of trust must be built and maintained between decision-makers and analysts.

The axiom among the Armed Forces that the Navy is the “first line of defense” is old and outdated; intelligence is now the first line of defense *and* the first line of offense. Wars are averted based on advanced warning and insight on adversary capabilities and intentions. And no wars are won without intelligence. Pilots can put a bomb on any target, any place at any time. Ground forces can kick down any door to capture or kill enemies. But how do they know what to target, where to target, and when to do it? And what are the consequences of those actions (to include second- and third-order effects)? These and other answers for decision-makers are derived from the global intelligence network. The network is the new weapon system; bandwidth the new class of supply, and data the new form of ammunition.¹⁰¹ No matter how impregnable the defenses or how lethal the offensive capabilities, the nation’s national security and interests are jeopardized without this network. If war is a game of chance as Clausewitz suggested, the odds will always favor the house with the advantage in intelligence.

Adapt or Perish

Henry Kissinger wrote, “The simplest approach to strategy is to insist on overwhelming potential adversaries with superior resources and materiel.”¹⁰² As the U.S. stares down a steep fiscal cliff, the simple approach isn’t feasible. Even if a massive budget surplus existed, as Secretary of War Henry Woodring said to President Franklin Roosevelt three years before U.S. entry into World War II, “Billions appropriated today cannot be converted into preparedness for tomorrow.”¹⁰³ Notwithstanding a reduced defense budget, now is the time to “move out” and seize the opportunity to address emerging security challenges in the Asia-Pacific through aggressive security cooperation initiatives that add “muscle” to the network.

In lock-step with the U.S. State Department’s engagement strategy of “forward-deployed diplomacy”, the U.S. military should strengthen the Trans-Pacific network by not taking existing relationships for granted, building new relationships, and connecting more partners to the network. Unlike a wasting asset, a growing network adds value over time. As more states enter the network, the smarter and more resilient the network becomes. Once in the network, there are no “local problems.” Problems become shared (as do opportunities and benefits). Based on the “increasing returns to scale” logic, the U.S. military must continue to invest in network building knowing that the investment will pay for itself over time. With a thick networked web, allies and partners can collectively provide regional security and maintain order with potentially less U.S. direct involvement. This scenario of self-reliant, empowered states can be described as “multi-polarity *within* Asia.”¹⁰⁴

Because the global integrated network consists of people, it is also a human domain. While operational concepts have been designed and published to ensure

access to the potential contested domains, the approaches outlined in this paper primarily focuses on the human domain. With a team of skilled, creative, and adaptable servant-leaders, the U.S. military institution's values and culture can better align with the environment and become a source of competitive advantage that attract others to the network. The success of the network and ecosystem depends not on hardware or software integration, but on people and relationships. The U.S. military can learn from the rise of Silicon Valley where "face-to-face exchange of ideas is still very important,"¹⁰⁵ and newcomers want to plug into the existing network of seasoned pros that "isn't matched anywhere else in the world."¹⁰⁶

For the U.S. military institution to remain unmatched anywhere else in the world, it will have to understand that in the human domain, face-to-face engagement is essential. The institution must understand the nature of multinational operations and relationship-building as a precondition for getting others to join the network. And to maintain its attraction, U.S. military personnel must lead credibly, align actions with words, and recognize that what is done is more important than what is said.¹⁰⁷ Lastly, the U.S. military must have clear leadership and vision that recognizes the necessity to adapt and discover opportunities to lock-in the rest of world. As Ramo cautions, "We shouldn't be worrying so much about losing our future to China...but rather about losing our future to our own inability to adjust."¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

The challenge in the Asia-Pacific is over leadership of the post-World War II international order. As in the Cold War, the U.S. will defend its order and global network but rely less on hard power. Actions taken today—as described in this paper—better prepare the "American order" to handle the challenges of tomorrow. In the competition

for influence in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. must seek and take advantage of opportunities to further expand its soft power and continue to build not just an *interconnected* network but an *interdependent* network. The U.S. “wins” by leading credibly, further expanding its lead in soft power rankings¹⁰⁹ and further extending its influence in the region. This cycle of increasing U.S. soft power and its corresponding power to influence behavior and shape the environment repeats itself.

China will have three options: co-exist and become a “responsible stakeholder” within the U.S.-led international order, create its own rival order, or overturn it through a great-power war. The U.S. objective is for China to choose the first option. Ikenberry explains how:

The more that China faces not just the United States but the entire world of capitalist democracies, the better. This is not to argue that China must face a grand counterbalancing alliance against it. Rather, it should face a complex and highly integrated global system—one that is so encompassing and deeply entrenched that it essentially has no choice but to join it and seek to prosper within it.¹¹⁰

In victory, U.S. allies and partners shoulder the lion’s share of their security burden by relying more on the network of multilateral institutions, rules, and agreements in the collective management of the region’s security problems. More states join the U.S.-led world of “locked-in system” not because they have to, but because they want to. And in victory, China also chooses to co-exist as a responsible stakeholder within this system.

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